

Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) Parent Booklet



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Hamad Medical Corporation

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Message from the Director

Dear parents,

Congratulations on the birth of your new baby.

Welcome to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at Women's Wellness and Research Center, Hamad Medical Corporation. We have a mission to treat and nurture premature babies with significant medical challenges.

Few families are prepared for the birth of an ill or premature baby; we know this can be difficult, confusing, and stressful. However, we hope to be able to support and help you during your baby's stay in our unit to minimize these stresses, and we hope that this booklet will help guide you through your journey with us.

My team and I are focused on providing you and your baby with the best care and wish you all the best during your stay with us.

Dr. Hilal Al Rifai
Medical Director

Introduction

Congratulations on the new addition to your family. The NICU team is here to provide exceptional care for your baby. We know that it is not what you expected and wished for, but we assure you that we will deliver the quality of care your baby needs in the best way possible.

The Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at HMC Women's Wellness Research Center can be busy. This atmosphere and equipment, such as tubes, wires, and devices on and around your baby may overwhelm you. However, the NICU staff will be there with you at all times to support you throughout your time with us.

This booklet will give you general information about what you may expect while your baby is in the NICU. While it may not answer all your questions, it will serve as a guide while your baby is under our care, and the staff are always available to answer your questions. Each baby is unique, and it is best to get information and communicate with your NICU team.

The Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU)

The NICU caters to all newborn babies who need special care after delivery. The unit can be found on the 4th and 5th Floors of the Women's Wellness and Research Center. It comprises three (3) areas: 4 North, 4 South, and 5 South. Your baby may be admitted to any of these areas, but be assured that the quality of care is standardized throughout all areas, even though some babies may have more complex care needs.

Below are some important numbers that will help you get in touch with the NICU team.

4TH Floor NICU Reception	40261513
4 North Nurse's Station	40261468
4 South Nurse's Station	4026 1480
5TH Floor NICU Reception	40261602
5 South Nurse's Station	40261570

Arriving at NICU

We encourage you to come and see your baby as soon as possible after their admission. Parenting your baby may be strange in the NICU, but we strongly encourage parental presence in the NICU daily.

We always consider you as a partner in the care of your baby and a member of the NICU team. Therefore, you will be given two identification cards for each parent, which you must bring with you every time you come to see your baby. This is to ensure the safety of your baby while under our care. Further instructions regarding this identification card will be given by the nurse looking after your baby.

When you arrive at the NICU, you will be greeted by our receptionist and security personnel. The receptionist will need to see your identification card and will assist you in signing the reception logbook before entering the unit. This is done to keep track of those people going in and out of the unit and to keep your baby safe.

Infection Control in the NICU

Babies born preterm and those sick are vulnerable to infections; we ask you both to adhere to our infection control and prevention as they are essential in ensuring minimal exposure to infection. Please remember the following to help us keep your baby free from infection:

- Seek advice from the nurse in charge if you think you might be ill.
- If you have an infection, you should not come to the NICU, but you are encouraged to call the unit and enquire about your baby and get an update.
- Tuck in any loose ties and head coverings.
- Hand and arm jewelry must be removed.
- You will need to wash your hands before entering the unit and wear a disposable gown. The reception and nursing staff will guide you on how to wash your hands. The disposable gown should be worn, so it covers your clothing from the shoulders down, so you must tie it up at the neck and back.
- Before and after handling your baby, you must rub your hands using the antiseptic solution available at your baby's bedside.
- Once you wash your hands, be aware of where you put them. For example: if you touch your hair, your mouth, your nose, or your mobile phone, you will need to do hand hygiene again.
- If you see any staff approaching to handle your baby, please ask if they have washed their hands. No one should touch your baby if they do not do hand hygiene.
- Additional information will be given to you by your primary nurse using the 5 Steps to Keep Your Baby Safe pamphlet.

Family Education

The NICU team will provide information regarding your baby. Additional parent information classes are being conducted weekly. These classes take place in the NICU 4th Floor Conference Room. We call this "HUG day" for "Helping U Grasp." Both parents are encouraged to attend and actively participate in these classes. In addition, we cover general topics for neonatal care, such as tips on breastfeeding, positioning and handling, and discharge planning.

You may attend these classes as often as you can. Schedules and topics for discussion will be provided to you by the nurse taking care of your baby, and they will be posted in the reception areas of the unit. It will allow you to be informed and provide confidence in your baby's care. This will also allow you to meet other families in similar situations.

Parents as Partners: Getting Involved in Your Baby's Care

It is normal to feel a little worried and uncomfortable about getting involved in the care of your baby when they are small and sick, but don't worry; the staff is on hand to help you. We feel that touching and bonding with your baby from the first day is important. Constant bonding with your baby is essential to your baby's recovery. Below are some of the bedside activities and care with which we would like you to be involved.

Breastfeeding

We strongly advocate breastfeeding in the NICU. It is one of the most important things you can do as parents. Breast milk is something that only you can provide. There are several benefits to breastfeeding. If your baby cannot directly breastfeed, the nurse caring for your baby will teach and assist you in expressing your breast milk.

We encourage fathers to support, promote and protect breastfeeding as it is a partnership between parents. A father's support and involvement significantly contribute to providing the best nutrition for the baby. This will also be discussed by the nurse taking care of your baby. A separate booklet for breastfeeding will be given to you and can be further discussed with any NICU team member.

Skin-to-Skin Contact

Both parents can touch their skin next to their baby, which is highly healthy for you and your baby. Regular physical contact helps you and your baby bond and feel comfortable. This can be done through "Kangaroo Care," which will be discussed by the NICU team, in which you hold your infant either within the incubator or outside the incubator.

We understand that you might be hesitant to do this initially. However, the NICU team will encourage and assist you in making this experience memorable for you and your baby. Your primary nurse will give you a pamphlet about skin-to-skin contact.

Routine Newborn Care

As partners in the care of your baby, you are encouraged to be involved in routine newborn care. Initially, we will explain and demonstrate the process. Once you feel confident in doing this care, you can do them independently in the presence of the primary nurse. You will be given a step-by-step guide you can follow even after discharge.

Memory Making

Several parents have told us that making positive memories of their experiences in the NICU can be therapeutic and alleviate stressful feelings. Thus, we recommend you document special moments with your baby to remember, honor, and celebrate their life by starting a journal in which you can record your thoughts, significant events, and milestones. You might want to get pictures of your baby to fulfill your journal; thus, you can ask the nurse taking care of your baby for some help. In doing so, kindly respect other patients' privacy, turn off the camera flash and follow infection control practices. You may also want to retain some keepsakes from your baby's time in the NICU such as identification bands or crib tags. These will be given to you when you take your baby home.

Birth Certificate

It is a must for you as parents to register and process your baby's birth certificate as soon as possible. One of the requirements you will need is the baby book which is available in our unit. The nurse caring for your baby will instruct and assist you in completing this process.

Once you have your baby's birth certificate, please proceed to the Admitting Department located on WWRC Ground Floor to make the necessary changes to your baby's electronic medical record.

NICU Routines

Comfort

In the NICU, your baby may be handled for different reasons. Handling may cause discomfort and pain. Giving your baby comfort is essential to their recovery.

The nurse taking care of your baby will explain and demonstrate how to provide comfort to your baby in the following ways:

- Providing a calm and clean environment.
- Giving a gentle, firm, and deep touch that can reduce pain.
- Talking to your baby in a calming voice.
- Providing oral comfort through non-nutritive sucking and giving your baby breastmilk if possible.

Pain

Your baby may undergo procedures and require treatment that may cause pain. You need to remember that you can stay with your baby during procedures if you want to.

We understand that seeing your baby in pain can cause stress. However, it will help you to remain calm if you remind yourself that these procedures and treatments are necessary for your baby's recovery. The NICU Team is highly skilled, and we are constantly trying to minimize the number of procedures and make those as painless and comfortable as possible.

Please let the NICU team know if you believe your baby has any signs of discomfort or pain or if you think the pain relief given to your baby is not helping.

Procedures and Treatments

The NICU team might do some procedures and treatments that will guide them to help assist your baby in complete treatment and recovery. The most common procedures and treatments your baby may receive are listed below.

- **Oxygen Therapy**

Most NICU babies will require oxygen support to help them breathe without difficulty. There are different types of oxygen support, and it is best to ask the NICU team.

- **Intravenous Line**

Once your baby is admitted to the NICU, a highly skilled member of the NICU team may insert a thin, bendable plastic tube into a blood vessel (vein or artery) of your baby to give medicines and fluids. These are usually secured on the hands, arms, or feet and may last for a few days depending on your baby's needs.

- **Blood Extractions**

Blood tests will give the NICU team important information in deciding the proper treatment for your baby.

Specific procedures for your baby will be explained further by the NICU team. We will be glad to answer all your questions and concerns about procedures performed on your baby. Becoming involved in your baby's care can help ease any anxiety you may be feeling.

Technology in the NICU

The Women's Wellness and Research Center is a state-of-the-art facility. It is committed to improving the lives of our patients by providing timely access to world-class specialist care.

As a part of this commitment, the NICU is equipped with advanced technology to aid in treating your baby. You will notice that your baby will be connected to medical equipment throughout their journey in the unit. Examples of equipment that may be used include:

- **Incubator**

This specialized machine will be your baby's bed from admission to discharge home. This device ensures an ideal environment wherein the temperature can be regulated depending on your baby's temperature. It also serves as a protective barrier for your baby against infection, allergens, and excessive noise and light.

- **Cardiorespiratory Monitor**

This measures your baby's heart rate, breathing, and blood pressure through wires connected to your baby's chest. You will see these values displayed on the screen. It serves as a way for the NICU team to monitor your baby continuously. However, we strongly advise that you focus on your baby and not on the numbers you see on the monitor.

- **Ventilator**

This mechanical device assists your baby in breathing until the baby can breathe effectively. It has many controls that will be adjusted by the NICU team depending on your baby's condition.

- **Intravenous Pumps**

A device connected to the intravenous lines ensures the accurate delivery of medicines and fluids.

The NICU Team

The NICU Team is composed of many healthcare professionals specially trained to care for sick newborn babies. We have a shared goal to ensure that you and your baby receive the best possible care in the hospital.

To help you understand our roles in the NICU, here is a brief list of the people you may meet:

- **Case Manager**

A registered nurse who arranges your baby's needs, such as appointments and follow-ups after discharge. The case manager will also arrange the transfer of your baby to a different NICU when and if that is required.

- **Clinical Pharmacist**

Assists in taking care of your baby's medicines and fluids. Clinical pharmacists work closely with nurses and physicians to ensure the medications given to your baby are helpful and safe.

- **Dietitian**

A healthcare professional trained to ensure your baby receives adequate nutrition to support their growing body.

- **Lactation Consultant**

A specially trained professional who provides you with support and information about breastfeeding your baby.

- **Neonatologist**

The doctor responsible for your baby's care that is trained and certified specifically in newborn intensive care.

- **Nurse Educator**

A registered nurse providing education to the nurses taking care of your baby to ensure that they are aware of the new practices that could improve the care given to your baby.

- **Nursing Aide**

A staff member who supports the unit by maintaining supplies, equipment, and other day-to-day activities.

- **Occupational Therapist**

A specially trained healthcare professional that will assist you in helping your baby build the foundational abilities needed for reaching developmental milestones.

- **Physiotherapy Specialist**

A NICU team member specializing in a range of motion exercises for your baby to overcome any bone or muscle concerns.

- **Patient-Family Educator**

A registered nurse who provides individualized standard education to parents.

- **Primary Care Nurses**

A registered nurse who has had specialized training on how to take care of very sick newborn babies. The nurse is always a part of the NICU team and will always provide direct care for your baby.

- **Psychologist**

A trained professional who will assist you with your emotional health needs.

- **Receptionist**

The responsible staff that welcomes you into our unit. She will check your ID and assist you in preparing before you enter the unit.

- **Respiratory Therapist**

A specially trained professional who takes care of your baby's breathing needs and sets up equipment that will be used for your baby. The respiratory therapist may also provide treatment that is appropriate for your baby.

- **Social Worker**

A member of the team that is responsible for helping you adjust to the sometimes stressful environment of the NICU. She provides support and resources to help you meet your psychosocial, emotional, and financial needs.

- **X-Ray Technician**

A professional trained to take X-rays of your baby.

In the morning, all members of the NICU team will meet to plan for your baby's care. We encourage you to join us during this meeting to also take part in planning your baby's care.

If your baby needs to be seen by a specialist from another department, your neonatologist and the nurse taking care of your baby will inform you. We encourage you to speak up every time you feel that you see anything that raises your concern.

Transitioning

Higher Level of Care

Once your baby has been identified as requiring surgical management and interventions, the NICU team shall transfer your baby to the affiliated hospital with the provision of neonatal surgical services. Your primary physician will further discuss this process with you.

Lower Level of Care

Once your baby no longer requires intensive care management, the NICU team may opt to transfer your baby to another Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) facility. Be assured that the standard and continuity of care runs through all the NICU of HMC. This decision is made in your baby's best interests and will be discussed with you when a transfer is required. You need to understand that transferring to a lower level of care is a positive move and the beginning steps of taking your baby home. Be assured that we will be here to support you every step of the way.

Going Home

It is common for parents to worry about caring for their baby at home after being in NICU for quite some time. Therefore, when your baby is under our care, we will plan for your safe transition to home. In addition, the education and training we give you through your NICU journey will help you be confident through the transitioning period and when you take your baby home.

You can anticipate that the time is near for transition and taking your baby home when your baby is:

- Stable and has no issues with their breathing.
- Able to maintain their temperature.
- Feeding well through direct breastfeeding or bottle feeding.
- Gaining weight.

Preparing for Discharge

On the day of discharge, please bring the following:

- Both parents' Qatar ID or passport
- NICU Identification Cards
- Baby's clothes that have been washed beforehand to remove potential irritants and residues
- Cooler for transport of frozen breast milk, if needed.

Satisfaction Survey

We want to hear and learn from you about your experiences with us. Therefore, before you leave the NICU, you will be asked to fill out a "NICU Satisfaction Survey" form. We strongly encourage you to answer the questions as accurately and as honestly as possible so that we can further improve our services.

Appointments and Vaccinations

A follow-up appointment is essential to make sure that your baby stays healthy. This information will be given to you by your primary nurse. This will include appointments to the baby clinic, jaundice clinic, and specialty services if needed. Some vaccinations will be given in the NICU before going home. Then, you will be given an appointment in the Baby Clinic or the Primary Health Care Center to complete your baby's vaccinations. Please come to the scheduled appointment to ensure your baby receives the appropriate vaccine at the right time. Please make sure that you bring your baby's book and other medical documents every time you have a hospital or clinic visit.

Child Passenger Safety

Keeping your baby safe and protected is essential. Here in the NICU, we strongly advocate using a car seat whenever you travel with your baby. The nurse taking care of your baby will direct you to the team that provides car seat support.

Notes

A series of horizontal dotted lines for taking notes.

